EUR INDEX

156

UNCLASSIFIED

AIR MAIL POUCH

11
RECD
MAR 4

ACTION
EUR

INFO
DCR
OLI
IE

To: Department of State 711.55 755.11/3-150

From: London, No. 980 March 1, 1950

Subject: Belgian Referendum on Royal Question.

The left-wing weekly Tribune of February 23, 1950 published the most vehement editorial comment to date on the Belgian referendum on the return of King Leopold.

After certain statements which were largely factual, the editorial closed with the following paragraphs:

"Leopold's refusal to abdicate in the face of so much violent opposition, and despite the very real danger of civil war and a permanently divided country, betrays his lack of concern for the welfare of his people and his exclusive preoccupation with his personal ambitions even more strikingly perhaps than his sell-out during the war.

"The plebiscite campaign has now opened. Campaign speeches, newspaper articles, posters and caricatures are of a fierce bitterness which by comparison make our own election campaign look like a village cricket match on a sleepy summer afternoon. The pro-Leopold faction is busy publishing and circulating the dirtiest rumors to counteract the devastating documentary evidence against Leopold which their opponents have published. Typical of these rumors is a story published last weekend which maintains that the Belgian Socialist Party has received large funds from the British Foreign Office to finance the anti-Leopold campaign."

Tribune does not speak for the British Labor Party, but it does represent the views of a strong left-wing element (Jennie Lee, Aneurin Bevan's wife, is on the Board of Directors, and Michael Foot who defeated Randolph Churchill in Devonport in the February 23, 1950 election is the editor).

Frances E. Willis
First Secretary of Embassy

FEWillis:mcm
February 28, 1950
Copy for American Embassy, Brussels

UNCLASSIFIED

755.11/3-150

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY J.L. Smith DATE NOV 1 9 1982
RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐
RELEASABLE ☐
PA OF FOI EXEMPTIONS